Fowl Feathered Review
No. 199

این کتب از قبیل آثار حضرت خلد الله

ملکه و سلطنته است که در ملک احقر المسلمین

عفی عنه ارسس سیف الدین

مرحوم وارد شد سنه ۱۱ ماه در محله

جمادی چند دادم جلد خریدم

بنا میزد عجب ارزان خریدم

JAMMU & KASHMIR UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
No 6133
Dt. 90.1.53
SRINAGAR

ALLAMA IQBAL LIBRARY
65
KASHMIR

Issue 199: Semicolons, Serendipity, and Sprinkled Surrender: The Doughnut Dividend

Fowl Feathered Review is a quarterly, a disordered artifact of the human impulse to categorize and consume the ephemeral. Produced by the Springwound Mammoth Pancake Coalition—an entity distinct from its waffle-centric counterpart—it is birthed under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Virgil Kay, its editor, presides over this enterprise from a paper canoe adrift on the Passagassawakeag, a river of dubious depth and even more dubious inhabitants. Surrounded by featherheads and their aquatic card games, Kay's reign is absolute, his word the final arbiter in the transformation of boastful souls into doormats. Layout and visual conceits are the province of Cookie Granola, while melodrama and histrionics fall under the purview of Childe Harold. Silent Bill, in his characteristically taciturn manner, provides necessary pauses. The review's structural integrity, or lack thereof, is the domain of Unkie Bob, whose talents extend to the mitigation of typographical errors and the prevention of electrical conflagrations. Everett Enótita serves as Kay's indispensable amanuensis, and the Ecum Secum Literary Brain Trust, in a gesture of dubious beneficence, offers nominal financial support. Printed upon the verdant expanse of Bald Porcupine Island, and laced with the enigmatic Kraa, a bioengineered culinary enigma, the Fowl Feathered Review remains a testament to human ingenuity, or perhaps merely a symptom of cultural decline. ISSN: 1929-7238.

"I am an observer of life, a non-participant who takes no sides. I am in the regimented society, but not of it."
--Moondog, The Viking of 6th Avenue

Return Policy:
If this magazine does not meet your expectations,
please return it to us in its original condition
for a full refund, minus the cost of enlightenment.

Submissions

Fowlpox Press: A Submission Guide for the Determined (or Deluded) To the Aspiring Artist (or Sandwich Enthusiast):

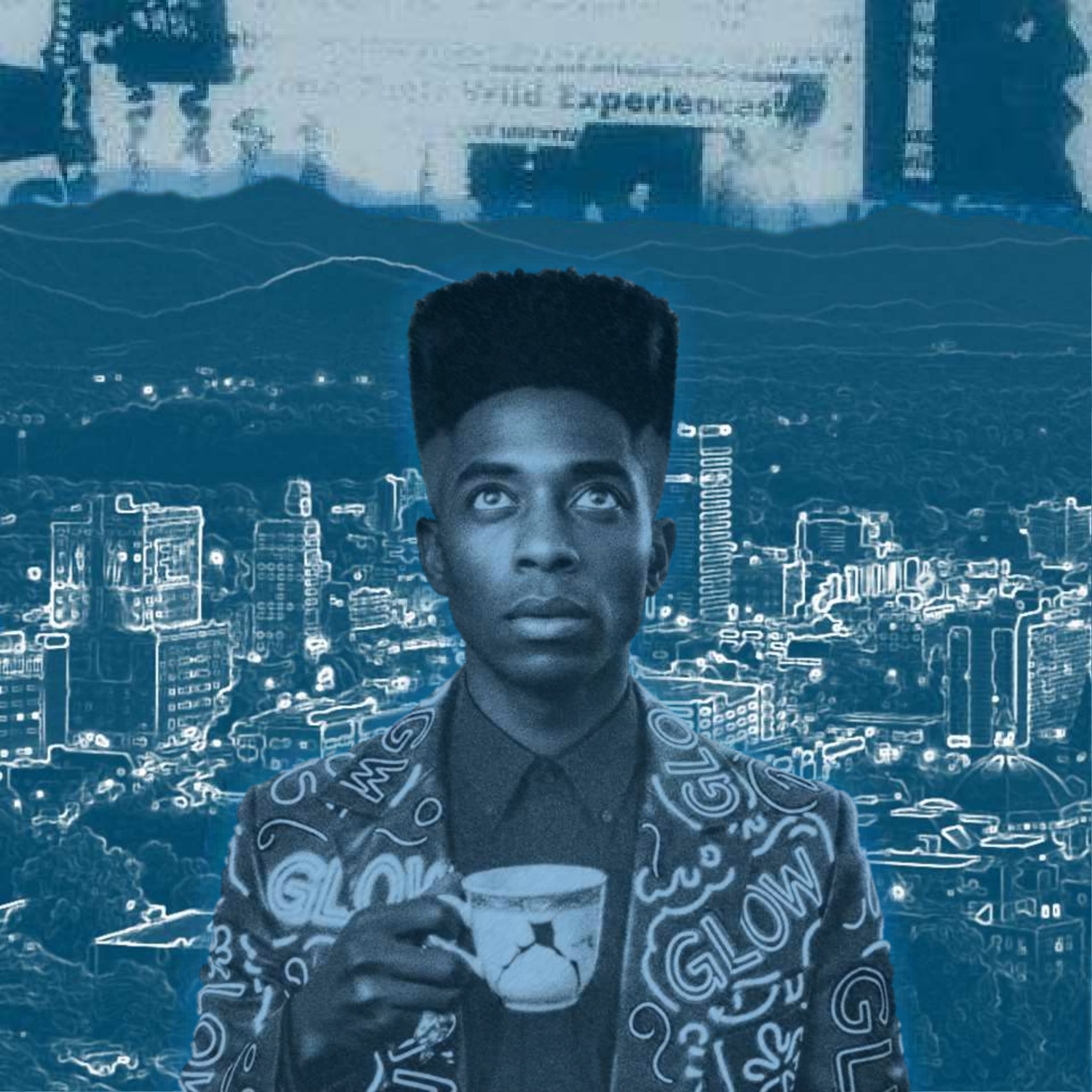
1. **Craft** (or **Culinary Construct**): 2-227 poems, a numerical range that hints at both ambition and a troubling lack of self-editing, may find their way to our digital doorstep (fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com). Alternatively, for the visually inclined, paintings numbered 2-953 (a prolific career, or perhaps a basement overflowing with forgotten canvases?) are welcome. We are also, inexplicably, open to submissions of twelve-inch sandwiches.
2. **The Gatekeeper:** Address your offerings to Virgil Kay, Editor. In posession of remarkably discerning taste, or so he believes, Virgil is a rooster of some renown, a creature of instinct and inexplicable confidence. His title, "China Wok Habitue," suggests a broader palate than one might expect from a bird, though it's more likely a testament to the local takeout joint's generous portions. (**Please note:** Include a bio, a desperate plea for recognition that will likely join the unread masses in the digital purgatory of our slush pile.)
3. **Format:** Poems, those valiant attempts at capturing the human experience in meter and rhyme, should be attached in a Word document or PDF. Paintings, windows into your soul (or a weekend spent with Bob Ross reruns), must be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or a format our aging technology can comprehend. Jokes, if they exist, should be delivered in MP3 format. We are, alas, not equipped to handle the nuanced art of the live performance. Sandwiches, a curious offering in the realm of artistic expression, require clear plastic wrapping and a small packet of Kewpie Mayonnaise. (**Pro-tip:** The Kewpie packaging is, undeniably, a work of art in its own right, and we encourage you to admire it before consumption.)
4. **The Cycle Continues:** We exist in a perpetual state of acceptance and rejection. A Sisyphean task, some might say. We receive submissions 365 days a year, a testament to the relentless hope, or perhaps blissful ignorance, of aspiring artists. However, with a heavy heart (and a full crop), we must inform you that rejections also occur 365 days a year.
5. **The Sandwiches:** Ah, the sandwiches. These, unlike your artistic endeavors, find a permanent home within our editorial sanctum. Virgil, in his infinite wisdom, has determined that a diet rich in carbohydrates is essential for maintaining his regal demeanor.
6. **Leap Year Follies:** Leap years, those extra days gifted by the whims of the calendar, offer no reprieve. Aspiring poets, it seems, are undeterred by such temporal anomalies. You are, however, cordially invited to "take a flying leap" during these additional 24 hours.

Please proceed with caution. Artistic aspirations are a delicate dance, and the path to publication is littered with the fallen hopes of countless dreamers. But hey, maybe your sandwich is killer. Just remember, Kewpie or bust.

Fowl Feathered Review | Poets & Writers (pw.org)

"Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco."

— Virgil, The Aeneid


GLOW
GLOW
GLOW

The Asheville DADA Junk Mail Oracle: A COLLAGE OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC ACCIDENTS

Compiled by Doctor Ditto Battelle

The Chromatic Menagerie of Clarence & Zap

A Fusion Singularity of Forensic Garbology, Existential Cutlery, and Lofty Absurdity

In a dust-dappled attic studio above the Blue Dream Curry House, Kelvin "Barty" Phincher shed his human coil like the husk of a cicada and emerged as Zephyr "Zap" Chromatic—the clandestine conductor of forgotten spoons, disconsolate socks, and broken circuit-board hymns. This dossier merges two archival fragments (Document A & B) into one roaring collage of myth, manifesto, and marginalia, complete with an appendix that doubles as forensic junk-mail scholarship.

Module I: The Mayor of Utensilia

Clarence the Spoon is no mere relic. With bottle-cap eyes—wide as small moons of perpetual worry—he's an oracular figurehead presiding over Utensilia: a stainless-steel polis where spoons dance in balletic solidarity with forks, condiments shine as guiding constellations, and butter knives slumber in mutual embrace. Zap's mania for the "hybrid symphony of cutlery lament" transforms every dropped fork into a ghost note, each abandoned ketchup packet into an unwritten verse.

“The hum of forgotten cutlery,” he whispers, channeling a frequency so low it warps the ether—an acoustic collage of breakfast tragedies collapsing into a poignant singularity. Within this dream-city, the lost socks of Asheville find not shame but sovereignty. No longer solitary runaways, they weave themselves into patchwork banners of communal warmth—an anthem to imperfection. And Clarence, elevated by wire-wrapped friends in a final crescendo, soars over Lexington’s pigeon-stained rooftops, surveying the scene with an understanding that every object, even a humble spoon, carries a soul.

Module II: Taped Recounting (4.18.2025)

(A crackling cassette from the River Arts District)

I watched Zap in his hermetic attic, lab coat aflame with “GLOW” paint, wires tangoing on his head like a disassembled clock possessed by a pigeon’s last feather. He struck a battered washing-machine drum with a whisk—*ram-a-whisk!*—and painted to the scorched resonance of metal against metal. Each spatula scrape across a grater summoned arcs of neon green and urgent orange onto canvas. He pressed Clarence to the microphone. “What do the butter knives *truly* feel?” he asked. “A deep-seated yearning for jam,” he answered himself, eyes glazed with revelation.

Module III: The Ontological Dissolution of the Modern Sock

The sock is a palimpsest of phantom laundry cycles—a hermit cradling existential dread. Zap’s magnum opus here: a kinetic protest-sculpture of orphaned socks and scavenged gears—a mechanical lament against capitalism’s forced pairing and merciless bleacher drum of commerce.

“One sock, one soul,” he scribbled in the margins of his mimeograph screed, ink smeared into jagged crescendos.

The Smeared Gospel: An Expanded Primer on the Zine's Alchemy

Zap's mimeographed zine wasn't a publication; it was a physical artifact of frenetic thought, a gospel of detritus pressed to paper. It was a singular, hand-cranked organism born in the same dust-dappled attic studio where his human coil shed. This was not the clean, sterile world of digital publishing but a world of toner streaks, ghostly smudges, and the sweet, dizzying smell of ink.

The zine itself, titled "The Chronicler of the Unused," was a testament to a wild, anarchic spirit and a craftsman's obsessive focus on process. Every page was a performance. Zap would first lay down his foundation using not one, but two manual typewriters. The first, a hulking, soot-black Underwood, its keys clattering with a resonant authority, was reserved for the jarring, all-caps titles. These weren't mere headings; they were pronouncements, headlines from an alternate universe. Think "BUTTER KNIVES YEARN FOR JAM" or "WASHING MACHINE DRUM BEATS THE HEART OF CAPITULATION."

The second, a sleek, delicate Olympia, its keystrokes a whisper of existential dread, was for the main body text—the dense, winding paragraphs that coiled and uncoiled like a python digesting an impossible meal.

He would then grab his finest quill, a solitary pigeon feather, and meticulously hand-draw every illustration. These were less pictures and more visual spasms: tangled wire portraits of Clarence, kinetic diagrams of the sock-sculpture, or abstract mandalas made

from the geometric shadows of forgotten utensils. To add a splash of unexpected vitality, he'd often employ a secondary color. This was rarely a standard hue. Instead, he would use anything from the lurid green of a spilled "GLOW" paint bottle to the faint orange of a rust stain he'd meticulously scraped from an old washing machine. This secondary color wasn't just for flair; it served as a visual echo of the zine's core philosophy—that beauty could be found in the overlooked and discarded.

The zine's true heart, however, lay in its unhinged, diatessaron-style articles. Zap didn't just write about things; he grafted disparate realities together into a single, cohesive fever dream. He would weave a detailed forensic analysis of a found Cracker Jack prize into a breathless lament on the commodification of joy. Or he'd graft a transcription of Clarence's "interview" with a butter knife onto a sprawling dissertation on the metaphysical weight of butter.

The River Arts District poets were his co-conspirators, lured by the promise of a glorious mess. There was the perpetually mournful Silas, who, one evening, brought a sonnet about the texture of stale sourdough. Zap, in his thrift-store finery, held up his chipped teacup.

"Ah, yes, the palimpsest of porous memory! Digadigadoowop... the yeast of yesteryear, the ghost of butterfat past, you see?" he'd declare, his voice a theatrical whisper. He then proceeded to thread Silas's verse through a technical schematic for a broken vacuum cleaner, the rhythm of the sonnet becoming a blueprint for a new kind of silence. Then there was Lena, a minimalist poet who offered a haiku about the silent suffering of a lost glove.

Zap, pecking at the air like a frustrated raven, would respond, "The solitary mitt, an epistemological rupture in the fabric of domestic cohesion! Caw!" He would then carefully interweave her haiku with his rambling screed on the "ontological dissolution of the modern sock," creating a symbiotic new form of literature where a single, poignant thought could anchor a hurricane of words. It was an act of collaboration that ignored

all conventional rules, an artistic fusion singularity that made perfect sense in the context of glorious, unbridled chaos.

Oh, the clangor and the racket and the beautiful din of this life, this beautiful, terrible, rusting, falling-apart life and all the beautiful spoons and socks and ghosts of cicadas flying up in a dream of jazz and streetlights and the smell of old curry, how we live among the things we've forgotten, the humming refrigerators, the lonely forks, the lost buttons on our coats and all the unspoken words in the empty air of a fire escape, a silent roar, a symphony of forgotten spoons and lost gloves and the hum of the world spinning on a spindle of wire and hope and a kind of terrible and beautiful sadness, yes, that's it, the sadness and the beauty all wrapped up and tied in a greasy knot.

Appendix & Forensic Notes

An enviable compendium of garbology, pinprick citations, and scattered footnotes

1. Clarence's Anatomy
    - Bottle-cap eyes: repurposed from Cracker Jack prizes, circa 1976
    - Handle warp: thermal stress from a melted birthday cake candle
    - Wire-wrapping: recycled instrumentation from Zap's de-commissioned circuit bender
2. Geolocations & Scavenging Grounds
    - Asheville River Arts District: Site of the original loom-shop hum recordings
    - Blue Dream Curry House alley: Pigeon-stained flyers and condiment confessions
    - Lexington Avenue fire escape: Discovered Document B's mimeographed screed
    - The Odditorium & Malaprop's basement: Impromptu zine drops, unsignaled
3. Audio-Visual Artefacts
    - *The Hum of Forgotten Cutlery*: A cassette of metallic laments recorded on an 8-track reel

- *Synesthetic Stream of Consciousness*: Live-feed glitch videos under "Phincher & Feather Systems"
- *The Chronicler of the Unused*: A noise poem whispered to a solitary pigeon

4. Metaphysical Residue
    - Patchouli-tinged air: Residual scent of endless zine runs and anti-digital protest
    - Burnt toast: A constant undercurrent, symbol of fleeting aspirations
    - Pigeon feather: The single molted token of avian intelligence (or surveillance?)

Epilogue: The Unfinished Symphony

Zap gifts these xeroxed missives to strangers—silent cargo of chaotic beauty—unsigned, like gifts from a restless ghost. In every faded ink smear, every erratic splice of narrative, lies a challenge: to hear the symphony behind the clang of a spoon and find companionship in an orphan sock. For art, after all, is the last refuge of the overlooked—and in the hands of a mad alchemist, even mundane detritus becomes a universe waiting to breathe.

"Utensilia moves on," Clarence seems to intone. "And so do we."

ALMOND CAKES

By Walentyna Ząbek

I used to walk with my grandmother through the labyrinthine streets of Budapest, a city that breathed rot and sweetness in the same exhalation, where the cobblestones hummed beneath our feet like a slow, ancient chorus of forgotten prayers and the air was thick with the sighs of old women selling almond cakes baked from memories and dust. We wandered through alleys that seemed to fold in on themselves, walls melting into each other like the wax drippings of long-extinguished candles, the sky a jaundiced eye blinking at the absurdity of our pilgrimage.

This document is a fever dream, an architectural plan for a funhouse that has been left to rot, its mirrors shattered into a million funhouse-sized pieces, each piece reflecting not a full image, but a fragment of some other funhouse that was never built. There is no William S. Burroughs, there is no cut-up machine, there is only the fever, the dream, the broken glass. A woman named Eugeneia Columbia, a 51-year-old female, is in the funhouse. She's not a patient; she is the funhouse.

The city's pulse was a fever; a delirium made of gas lamps flickering like dying fireflies caught in the net of twilight.

A surgical pathology report, a colonoscopy performed on the funhouse. The provider is Lady Killa 5000, MD, a title that has been cut from a comic book and pasted into a medical document, a joke written in blood and fear. Norman K. Temple, MD, the pathologist, a priest of the flesh, reading the entrails, the tea leaves of the gut, looking for omens of sessile serrated lesions and hyperplastic polyps.

At the edge of the street, a shop loomed like a funhouse from a dream half-remembered, its glass shattered into fractals of some alternate Budapest that never was, each shard reflecting not itself but an echo, a phantom carnival of mirrors that fractured the very notion of reality. The sign, painted in trembling letters—"Almond Cakes"—was a promise and a curse, a siren's cry in a universe where sweetness was a weapon wielded by ghosts with trembling hands.

The funhouse is divided into five specimens. The colon is a map, a landscape of tan mucosal fragments. The cecum is a sessile serrated lesion, a prehistoric monument on a Martian landscape. The right colon is another sessile serrated lesion, but this one has a dense, fibrotic scar, a wound that has never healed, a memory of some forgotten trauma.

Inside, the cakes sat under a glass dome like relics from a forgotten altar, their powdered sugar crusts a fragile crust of time itself, dusted with the residue of centuries of craving and regret. The air was thick with the scent of almond and decay, a perfume that whispered of childhoods lost and futures that never arrived. My grandmother's eyes gleamed with a fierce, unholy joy as she picked one up, the cake trembling in her hand like a captured heart.

The transverse colon is an inflammatory pseudo polyp, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. The splenic flexure is nondiagnostic, it contains only fecal matter, yellow-tan material, likely vegetative matter, a blank page in a book of lies. The sigmoid colon is a hyperplastic polyp, a growth of memory, of forgotten things, a four-fragment-of-tan-mucosal-tissue-and-vegetative-matter, a growth of things that should have been forgotten, a growth of things that should never have been.

"You must eat," she said, voice low and strange, as if the words were incantations. "But beware the sweetness. It will fill you, and then it will empty you. You will need the syrup." Her hand produced from the folds of her coat a small vial of ipecac syrup, dark as the night's own blood, a medicine and a poison, a key to expulsion and revelation.

San Diego is a parallel universe, a universe of milk, of milk fat, of milk consumption. The per-capita consumption of milk is low, just 0.44 of a pint in 1934, a world without milk,

a world without mothers, a world without nourishment. The consumption increased to 0.47 of a pint in 1935, but this was only because of an influx of fair visitors, a temporary reprieve from the great milk drought. The milk market is isolated, a world unto itself, a world of high prices and internal disturbances.

The cake was a universe unto itself—dense, molten, a fever dream of almond and sugar and shadow. I bit into it and the world shattered, a kaleidoscope of fractured realities spinning madly in my mouth. The sweetness bloomed, a grotesque flower of pleasure and pain, the shards of the funhouse reflecting in my eyes. Then the syrup, bitter and thick, slid down my throat like liquid despair, and the purging began—a convulsion of memory and loss, the expulsion of the dream itself.

The production of milk fat increased by 63% from 1925 to 1935, but the volume of market milk distributed only increased by 31%, a growing surplus issue, a growing problem, a growing lie. The producers' prices were slow to show the effects of the depression, but by 1933 the price decline was as significant as in Los Angeles, a wound that has never healed, a memory of some forgotten trauma. The number of distributors grew from 10 in 1928 to 18 in 1935, a growth of parasites, a growth of things that should never have been. The arrival and departure of the Navy creates a periodic surplus problem that the milk production system cannot easily adapt to, a problem of flux, of change, of things that should be but aren't. A pooling system would be a desirable solution, so that all producers would share the burden of these periodic surpluses, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths.

And as I knelt there on the cracked pavement, the city around me folding and unfolding in endless loops of fevered delirium, my grandmother smiled—her teeth sharp as broken glass—and whispered, “Such is the truth of sweetness and of sorrow, child. To taste is to suffer; to suffer is to remember.” The almond cakes, the shattered mirrors, the fever dream—all woven into the infinite tapestry of decay and desire that is Budapest, forever a labyrinth without exit, a funhouse without mirrors whole enough to reflect reality, only fragments of the impossible and the forgotten.

The Polish newspaper, "NIEDZIELA," is not a newspaper, it is a fossil, a fossil of a time that has been forgotten. The title is written in a bold, sans-serif font, a modern font in a world of traditional serifs. The headline is "ZAMYSŁ CARSKI!" which translates to "THE TSAR'S INTENTION!" or "THE TSAR'S PLAN!" a plan for peace in a world of war, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. The article discusses Tsar Nicholas II's proposal for a peace conference to limit armaments, a plan that will fail, a plan that will lead to more war. The text on the right side discusses the need to raise one's voice peacefully, contrasting it with the ideas of a philosopher or dreamer, and asks when one can rise up, a question that will never be answered. It then mentions a "Bismarckian" deception from Austria and France, a deception that will lead to a new "calamity," a wound that will never heal, a memory of some forgotten trauma. The publication details on the left list subscription prices in Austrian currency, a currency that has been forgotten, a currency that has been replaced by a new currency, a new lie, a new delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths.

“Ptasie mleczko,” or “Bird’s milk,” is not a confectionary, it is a secretion from the lining of the crop of parent birds in some species that is regurgitated to young birds. It is a holocrine secretion non-sex specific in response to brooding, unlike in mammals where milk is an apocrine secretion, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. It is produced by both males and females in pigeons and flamingos, and in penguins, only by the male, a world of contradictions, a world of lies. It contains both fat and protein, as with mammalian milk, but unlike mammalian milk, it contains no carbohydrates, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. It is a semi-solid substance somewhat like pale yellow cottage cheese, a food of a forgotten world, a food of a world that never was. It contains antioxidants and immune-enhancing factors which contribute to milk immunity, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. It also contains some bacteria, a growth of parasites, a growth of things that should never have been. It begins to be produced a couple of days before the eggs are due to hatch, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. The parents may cease to eat at this point to be able to provide the squabs with crop milk uncontaminated by seeds, which the very young squabs would be unable to digest, a lie, a delusion of grandeur in a world of small truths. The baby squabs are fed on pure crop milk for the first week or so of life, a world of milk, of milk fat, of milk consumption, a world without mothers, a world without

nourishment. A pair of breeding pigeons cannot produce enough crop milk to feed three squabs adequately, which explains why clutches are limited to two, a world of limits, a world of lies.

The scent, ah, the scent! Not merely old paper, no, but the ghost of paper, a spectral library exhaling the dust of unread Alexandria, mingled indiscreetly with the desiccated sigh of lavender – not just lavender, mind you, but lavender pressed between the pages of a grandmother's forgotten hymnal, smuggled across borders in a hatbox smelling faintly of anxiety and caraway. This olfactory conspiracy curled, serpentine, around the edges of a headline bleached by time and indifference, whispering not news, but the expectation of news, the societal hum clinging like cheap perfume to the laughter of cartoon women, their embrace a geometrical absurdity echoing in the vertical script of a land where time itself was a sluggish bureaucrat shuffling papers labelled February, March, ad infinitum.

A land where one man's manuscript lay scattered, a deck of cards dealt by a cackling, unseen croupier onto the felt of chaos, each page a potential queen or knave, yearning for the impossible flush of completion, for form wrestled from the glorious, terrifying muddle of creation. Then—a click, sharp as a dislocated bone! The image fractures: a figure, stark as a paper cutout against the non-descript void, weapon poised. A shadow falls, not like dusk, but like a dropped anvil. A narrative shard, jagged and cold, surfaces from the digital ooze—a forgotten archive smelling of ozone and despair.

Dropped body. Murmured name. The air thickens, pregnant with drama's heavy perfume, yet holds its breath in the peculiar, crystalline stillness of the captured instant. A world where fictional corpses bleed real ink onto the fabric of the actual, where the silent scream trapped in grainy black-and-white is the loudest sound in the room, a forgotten anecdote resurfacing like the femur of some extinct, bureaucratic beast in the silt of a river choked with discarded punch-cards.

And then! A lurch into the violently saturated! A solitary fruit—a pear, perhaps? No, too mundane. A concept of pearhood, rendered in hues that screamed at the retina, vibrating beside a confection so unnaturally pink it hummed. All this perched on a sterile black

abyss, a void like polished obsidian. A fever dream? An obsession fleeting as a mayfly's existential crisis? Sensory input divorced from context, a jarring trumpet blast in the symphony of disparate voices—the library ghost, the cartoon laughter, the bureaucratic time-sludge. A self-contained universe of colour and form, a beauty arbitrary as a spilled paint can, born from the cold, precise algorithms of digital manipulation.

A whisper, insistent: this is not a pear; this is the Platonic Ideal of Pearness Under Duress! Ah, the collector! Cataloguing desire with the precision of a mortician. Seeking fragments: the vanished locket, its clasp perhaps still warm from a neck long dust; the forgotten soap opera character, their melodrama echoing in the empty theatre of memory; the ghostly crackle of old radio heroes, their valour dissolved into static.

A pursuit resonant with the fragmented nature of recall itself, this relentless, melancholic archaeology of vanished entertainments. The desperate stitching together of wholeness from scattered, mismatched pieces. The poignant recognition, like biting into a wax apple, that even the most beloved narrative eventually succumbs, fading into the amber of time, a fly preserved mid-buzz. A yearning, vast and aching, for connection across the chasms of decades, mediums, the very fabric of entropy.

Finally, the shimmer! A mermaid phantom, scales catching light like discarded celluloid, celestial adornment glinting like a misplaced rivet from the firmament. Flanked by cartoon companions sprung from a lyricist's inkwell, rendered in flowing script across a landscape of pure, unadulterated whimsy. A dedication murmured to unseen voices, collaborators lost in the fog of creation. A snapshot, yes, but a snapshot of a shared elsewhere, a fleeting moment of artistic communion snatched from the ether and pinned, wriggling, to the page.

A testament, fragile as a soap bubble, to the enduring, illogical power of collective dreaming, to the strange, beautiful, utterly nonsensical logic of narratives woven from moonbeams and the scent of stale cardboard. Each image! A shard, a splinter of the lost or the misremembered. A silent conversation conducted in the dead languages of forgotten magazines and pixel ghosts, spanning continents, centuries, the dubious geography of the inner mind.

A constellation of fleeting associations–lavender, violence, pear, locket, mermaid–forming a shimmering, unstable whole, a private cosmos where the membrane between what was, what is, and what might have been scribbled on a napkin at 3 AM dissolves like sugar in cheap gin. Leaving only the persistent, melancholic hum vibrating in the bones, the low thrum of potentialities unrealized, a continuous, swirling vortex pulling everything–the scent, the shadow, the fruit, the ghostly hero, the shimmering tail–towards an indefinable center, a singularity of pure, glorious, utterly inexplicable maybe.

SOULS OF POTTED PLANTS (PLANTS ARE OLD SOULS)

BY SILVIE MIKULOVÁ

The coming of spring, that slow and agonizing unclenching of winter's fist, brought to the town of Palermo, Maine, a custom which, with the wisdom of hindsight and a certain grim resignation, must be abolished. Not with a decree, but with a sledgehammer blow to the very idea of it. Here, a contractor, a man whose love for his mother was a thing of almost mythological purity and whose respect for his father a weight of granite upon his breast, decided to pay his fine. But a payment is a negotiation, not a surrender. And his payment was a monument, an act of alchemical transubstantiation.

He delivered it not in the crisp, paper rectangles of the modern economy, nor the gleaming digital phantoms of the banking sphere, but in a mountain of loose change, over 12,000 pounds of it, a copper and zinc cataract that cascaded into the hallowed, linoleum-floored sanctum of the town office. At first, it was a sound, a metallic hiss that became a roar, a geologic event, a slow-motion avalanche of base metal. It was, perhaps, a very good thing, this payment, for it was, in its way, a fulfillment. But the town selectboard, a coterie of gentlemen and gentlewomen with the glazed eyes of bureaucrats and the souls of potted plants, found it unprofessional. They believed, with a certain dogmatic fervor, that all commerce with the town ought to be conducted in a respectful manner, a manner as beige and predictable as a municipal parking lot. The contractor,

Derek Other, said the change was a message, a kind of one-fun-way of saying: 'Here is your payment, good luck.'

This, in its way, recalled the matter of Warsaw, a city of avenues and ghosts and the incessant, buzzing murmur of history. A studentess, whose beauty was of the sort that could make the world melt in the gaze of her beauty and cause streetlights to flicker, was observed and accompanied not by her peers, but by a "society" of non-students, a rabble of gentlemen with the manner of prison wardens on a day trip. It was not her, you see, but a kind of "friend" and "acquaintance" who was forced to follow in her footsteps, as if she were a criminal on the run. This crowd, this "coterie" of gentlemen on Marszałkowska Street, was so immense that it formed a secondary guard, a second-hand escort of whispers and insinuations. It spread gossip, a poisonous ether, from which one could receive a reputation as fragile and perforated as paper. A woman is made like paper. She is very delicate.

And so we come to the wise Pole, a man who knows what is good for him, and what is bad. In the Kujawy country, in a village where a girl named Marysia lives, we find our wise Pole. Our contractor, Derek Other, a wise Pole transplanted to the cold, hard soil of Maine, stood before his payment, a mountain of copper and zinc, over 12,000 pounds of metal, a remedy for many illnesses.
The mountain tea's flavor and character, a secret concoction of rare herbs, is for drinking tea. It will be two cups down and to the left. On the right, also, one must add three drops of water to the tea, making the ‘hong’ character, and then drink. This was the protocol. This was the ritual. The payment, this vast pile of vitriol and alkaline salt, was to be applied as an ointment for cold fluids on the limbs and head. It was an Elixir Proprietatis.

A Balsam, an ointment against gout. The instructions, a text in a forgotten, angular script, were clear: mix and distill in a retort over fire. The contractor, a man who knew how to earn a dollar and who was not a miser (miserliness being a form of psychic constipation), saw the payment as a poultice, a sin balsam. He saw it as a remedy for a closed heart, a heart that beat with the rhythm of regulations and fines.
This loose change pile was a magnificent, chaotic form. It was a photograph, a very beautiful thing, because you can keep a memory. The memory of a photograph is a

memory of something that is not there, a thing you can show to your friends. This pile, however, was the very antithesis of a memory. It was an alchemical vessel of glass, fire, and water, a living, breathing thing. Nocturnal cats on a fence meowed at it, their green eyes glowing in the lunar luminescence. They scratched at the moon, fought for a piece of heaven.

The town clerk, a woman like a balloon filled with air when a new love is born, stood before the pile. She was looking at a powder for acne spots on the face. She was looking at an ointment against epilepsy. The gossip should be abolished at all costs. The wise Pole knew this, and he had his own methods. Marya Głowacka, by making her way through the Marszałkowska crowd, had given one of them such a slap that he ended up on the curb, a spectacle of bruised ego. She should have done that to all of them. This, the payment, was a similar gesture, a slap in the face of the town, a monument to their own bureaucratic folly.

To go everywhere recruiting soldiers and gathering a crowd of horses.
Sincerely train to protect the master and guard the country.
The text was a mix of a secret society's ideological document, a book of remedies, and a surrealist's dream. The Hung Shun Tong, a secret society in Northern California, had poems from ancient warriors, and perhaps the contractor was a member. The loose change was a powder for "blutefreisen," a skin rash or inflammatory condition with bleeding. The contractor was a man who knew how to do what was good for him. He had his own way of leading the society. He had a feeling that his love was not very pure, a feeling that fluttered within him like a trapped bird. He saw the pile of coins, and he felt like a little bird.

The town clerks, with a mix of Latin and early German, tried to translate the payment, to parse its meaning. It was a formulary text, a recipe for a laxative powder. A laxative powder for a town that was constipated with its own rules, with its own suffocating sense of propriety. The wise Pole knew that a photograph is a very beautiful thing. He gave them a photograph of their own bureaucracy, a photograph of their own rules, a photograph of their own making. He gave them a monument. He gave them a paper, a paper made of a rib and a little bit of dust. He gave them his love, a feeling that must be

pure, honest, and without any fear of the future. The cats on the fence, their meows now a chorus of lament, continued their scratching at the moon, and the mountain of metal stood silently, a testament to a truth so simple it could only be conveyed in a grand, absurd gesture.

A Semiotic Inquiry into the Ruinous Aporetics of a Bear, a Spork, and a Glistening Past

By Low-Cost Locust

In the unspooled film of history, a jittery newsreel of faces and names flickers, a flicker that one day dissolves into the granular static of an unrecoverable signal, the way a photograph curls at the edges and a list of names, once a living roster, becomes nothing more than an empty signifier on a tombstone of a page; and a figure in widow's garb, hat and veil like a black butterfly over her face, stands at the edge of the frame, gloved hands holding a can of furniture polish, spraying the very image of the past itself, leaning in to sniff the waxy sheen she has given the forgotten smiles. The mind, a restless, unmoored schooner on a sea of half-recalled faces, drifts and muses on the sheer, entropic weight of a group of names like the tribes of Judah—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin—all reduced to the same surname, Cobb, and the same blurred, forgotten tableau of a high school play of 1949, a moment so meticulously documented and yet so utterly lost to any genuine human context that it exists now only as a phantom, a whisper from a prompter's box in a play no one remembers, a courtesy of one Benjamin Cobb, a keeper of these paper souls, who in a deeper sense is a keeper of nothing at all, a righteous cat just digging the scene from his own private pad.

But even this flickering scene is set, quite literally, upon a stage: for as the black-and-white world grows unstable, the edges of the image begin to tremble and warp. The backdrop—a proscenium arch and flats constructed from paper maché, the surface a bricolage of old Rumford town ledgers, yellowed 4-H club newsletters, playbills from the 1949 high school production, and the last known copy of the Rumford Falls Times (October 13, 1951)—shines with a gloss of kindergarten tempura paint in broad, childish strokes of aquamarine, ochre, and pink. The names and faces, the Cobb family line, flicker, then stutter, and then the entire scene is dismantled by unseen hands: the painted paper maché peels away in clumps, the names and dates torn and reshaped, the stage floor swept clean of its brittle, multicolored confetti.

Across the temporal divide, a new tableau. From the depths of Rumford's past, a diner emerges from the fog of memory, its chrome and neon a beacon on **Canal Street**. The year is again '49. The light catches the metal gleam, a still life in the American night. A faint mist hangs in the air, the unmistakable scent of lemon-scented polish, as Grandma Cobb, a specter in widow's weeds, works diligently at the diner's facade, burnishing the chrome and sniffing it up close with the dedication of a priestess. This vision, this culinary fossil, is offered through the good grace of one **Adam Cobb**. A courtesy, a gift from the past.

But as she polishes, the diner's Formica counters and chrome stools are revealed to be nothing more than **papier-mâché shells**. The walls are patched together with **the faded, spidery script of Amos Cobb's ledger of daily receipts (1948-1950)** and **a child's composition book: "My Summer at the Pond," by Pierre Cobb, Grade 3, Miss Lajoie's class, 1954"**, its margins still sticky with blue fingerpaint. The diner's neon sign flickers, "EAT," in looping brushstrokes of red tempera, before it too is peeled away by the same invisible stagehands, revealing the next set behind.

The paper, a chronicle of the fleeting, speaks again. A motorboat cuts the surface of a pond, the fall of '59 a backdrop of ochre and rust. **Miles Cobb**, at the helm, and **John Cobb** with the bear. **Amos**. A beast of burden, a captive of circumstance. He had invited

his friends and artists, men like **Pierre Cobb**, **Charles Cobb**, and **Alberto Cobb** to lend a hand.

"Yo, mac, where's this winch for the window, huh?" growled **John Cobb**, his voice a rusty trombone in the back of a Model T, "This whole jazz, this scene, it's all just a flatfoot's lament on the grimy sidewalk of life."

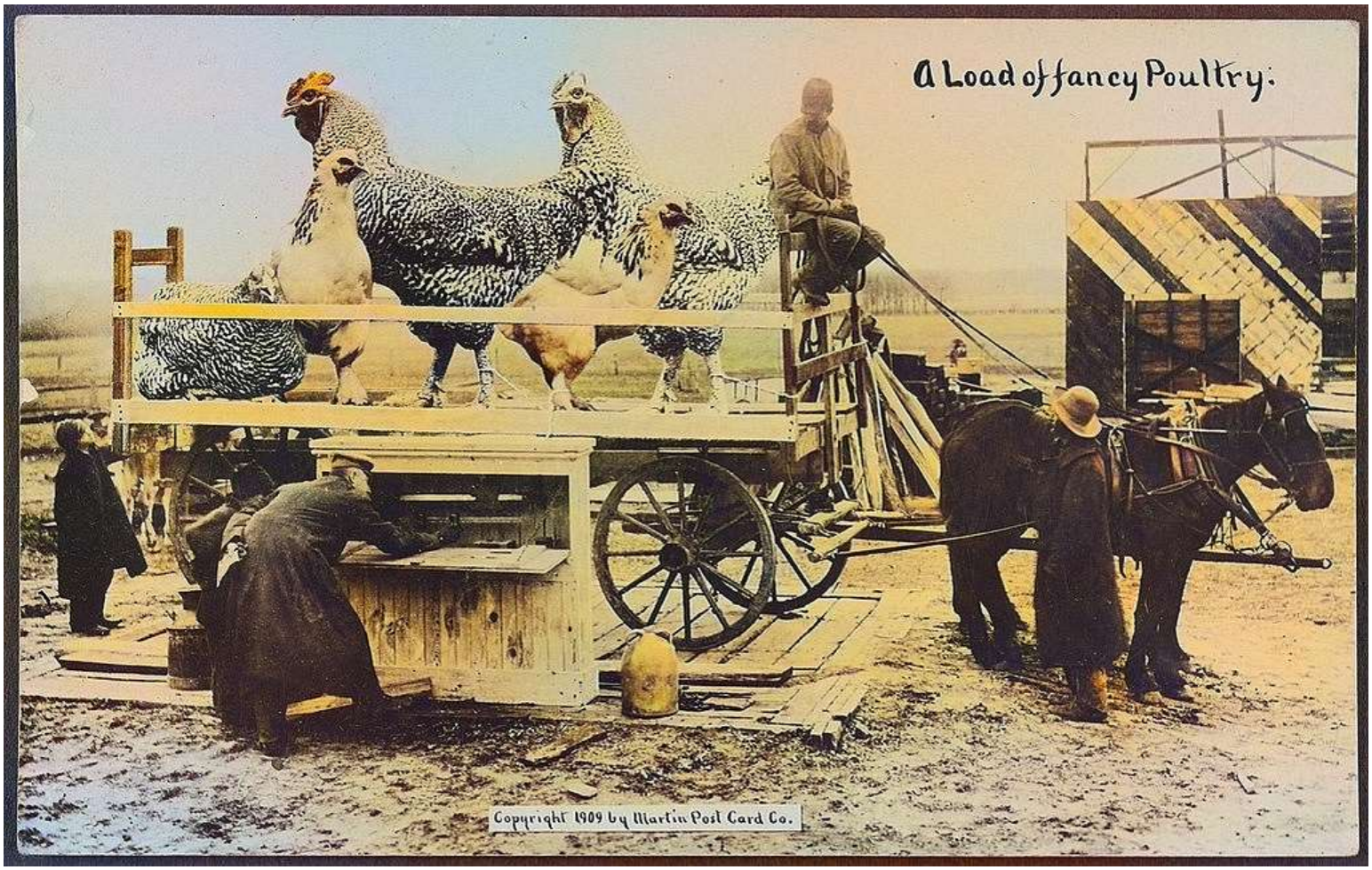
But as the scene unfolds—Samuel Cobb, the spork, the bear's lament—the pond itself is revealed to be **a rolling layer of newsprint and old play programs shellacked in watery stripes of schoolroom tempera: "Rumford Junior High Field Day, 1947," "Canal Street Diner Menu, 1952 (Breakfast Special: Two Eggs and Corn for 25¢)," and a yellowed mimeograph of "The Ballad of the Bear and the Spork," hand-lettered by Charles Cobb in the margins of his math homework.** The water ripples, and the surface tears, and the canoe is nothing but a hollowed log of stacked report cards ("Samuel: Needs Improvement in Listening Skills"), and the whole tableau is dismantled by the returning hands, the characters themselves helping to peel back the soggy layers, stepping through the opening in the pond's brittle shell.

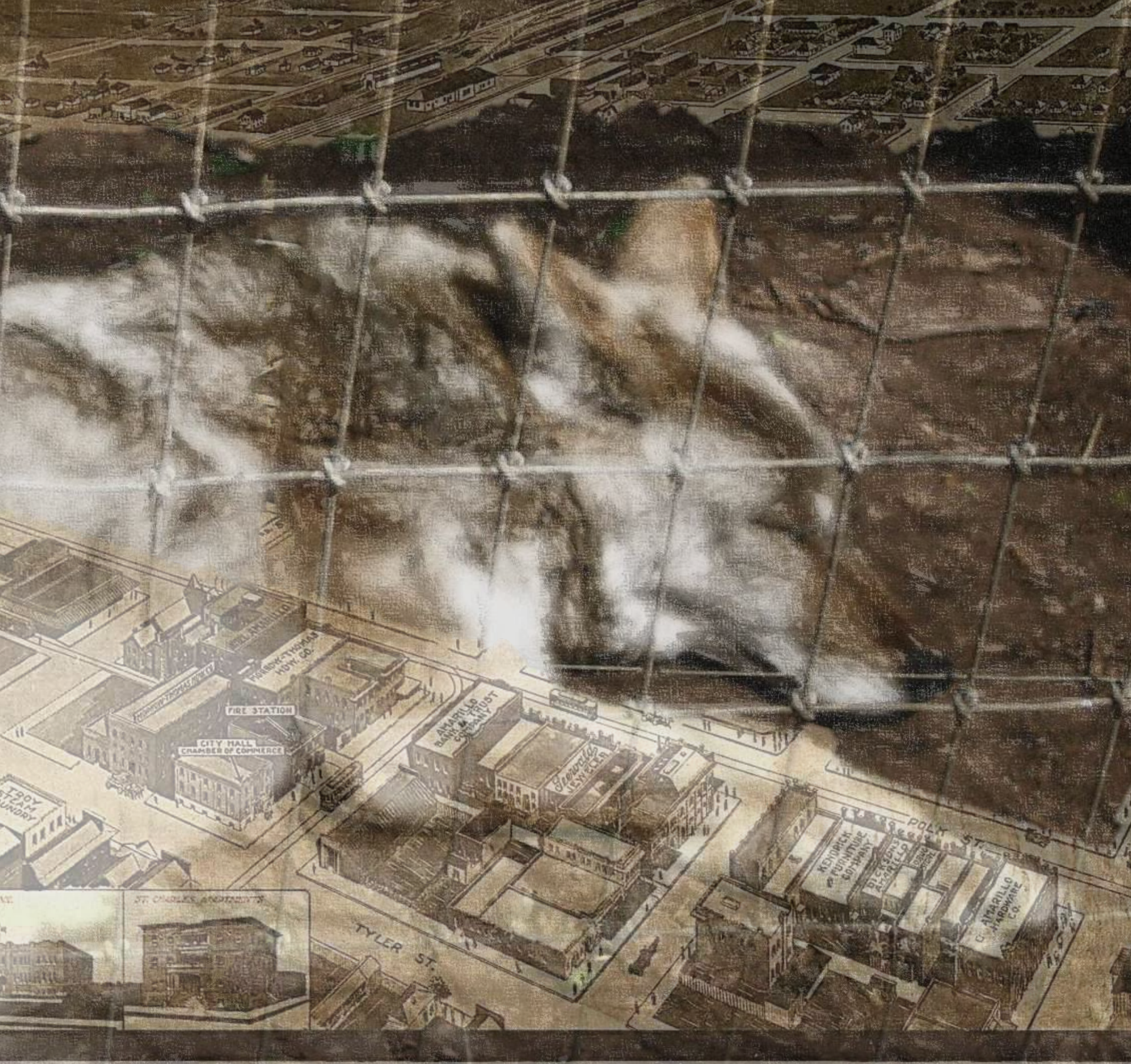
In a moment both comic and ceremonial, each character—Samuel with his spork, Amos with his wounded pride, Grandma Cobb with her can of polish—grabs a corner of the pond, the diner, the proscenium arch, and with a tug, the **paper maché world collapses inwards**. Old minutes from the Rumford Rotary Club, playbills, recipes handwritten on the back of overdue library notices, all painted in primary colors and now torn and fluttering like autumn leaves, are swept aside to reveal the bare boards beneath.

The bear, the spork, the glistening past—each figure **exits through the gap** left by the wreckage of history, trailed by a confetti of shredded manuscripts and the sticky aftertaste of childhood paint. The next scene, whatever it might be, waits behind a palimpsest of torn, painted paper, the ruins of old stories and the raw material of new ones.

And in the exposed silence, Grandma Cobb stands, hat and veil still perched as a black butterfly, gloved hands now empty, sniffing the air. "That sad voice was not Hershey's

chocolate bar, I hope chest nuts roasting on an open fire," murmurs the passing tourist, as the last flecks of tempura color drift down, settling over the lake, the diner, the long-lost high school stage—each a ghostly, glimmering remnant of a memory, a moment, a name.





√ AEROPLANE VIEW OF BUSINESS DISTRICT AMARILLO, TEXAS √

THE AMARILLO METAMORPHOSIS: A SYMPHONY OF PIGWEED AND DUST

By Exodus Page

In the parched womb of the Panhandle, where the earth hemorrhages a jaundiced lament and wildflowers detonate like a chandelier shattered by the fist of a god in a temper, a new abomination has been birthed. They call it the **Amarillo Sod Poodles**, a name that slithers off the tongue like a lubricated euphemism for existential despair, now transmogrified into the **Yellow City Pigweed**. This is no mere rebranding, but a taxonomic revolt, a botanical coup d'état, a sport gone feral, a surrealist haiku scrawled in baby-blue and ochre across the scorched canvas of West Texas. It is a mutation that hums with the electric whine of a dust-devil tornado, a creature born of the desert's savage history, its roots tattooed onto the soul of a man who once swallowed a tumbleweed whole and emerged as a fever-dream lexicographer. (Smith, 2018, p. 45; *Folkways Records*, "Dust Bowl Ballads," 1940, Track 3: "The Great Dust Storm")

This is not a team; it is a layer cake of cultural detritus, a collage of discarded parts and commercial ambition. The Sod Poodles, already a joke in their own right, have shed their skin like a serpent molting its past, revealing something primordial, something that defies categorization. They are a plant that aspires to flight, a dried husk of their former selves, vagabond seeds carried on the breath of the wind, ghosts of what once was, now reduced

to a memory whispered across the plains. (Eco, 1976, p. 112; *EMI Classics*, "Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring," 1960, Conducted by Pierre Monteux)

Their president, a man named Ensor, speaks of a "family-friendly brand," but what kind of family is this? A family of Pavlovian automatons, conditioned stimuli, fear-responses bred into the marrow of babies? A family where the rat is the alpha and omega, the opera glasses a neutral void, incapable of eliciting anything but a blank stare? A family of emotional hierarchies, where thunder is god and caterpillars are lesser deities, feared in quick, brutal trials? This is a family of oversimplified caricatures, each a simple equation of cause and effect, a pattern to be controlled, a soul fused into the singular, screaming void of Captain Crunch, who is not a man but an endless, echoing program of suffering. (Pavlov, 1927, p. 23; *Blue Note Records*, "John Coltrane: A Love Supreme," 1964, Track 1: "Acknowledgement")

André de Lorde, the impresario of the Grand-Guignol, saw his vocation as a doctor leaning over a patient, a painful curiosity, an infinite pity for all human suffering. This is the new aesthetics: a voyeuristic, sympathetic stare at the agony of the world, making it docile, consumable. My suffering, he says, is your suffering, and your suffering is mine, until it all dissolves into a perfect, painless passivity. Like the good Samaritan, I am one with my brothers and sisters, and their suffering is mine. But for the Floridian retirement community resident, the neighbor (*ton plésion*) was limited to other residents. Now, in the age of the pigweed, the neighbor is everyone, everyone from every nation and Sam's Club membership, everyone who is a brother or sister in the universal faith of suffering, a vast, amorphous collective of pain, a single, screaming soul. (de Lorde, 1905, p. 78; *Folkways Records*, "Negro Prison Songs," 1956, Track 7: "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen")

In this fragmented world, an old image re-emerges, a monochrome ghost from another era: Maria Blanchard's *"Child with a Hoop"*. A fractured cubist nightmare of shapes and planes, a child that is not a child but a collection of dismembered angles, a body that is a puzzle of form. Is this the new individual? A piece of the whole, a part of the greater suffering? Or is it a portrait of the soul of the Yellow City Pigweed, a creature made of discarded parts, a child of the wind and the dust, a new species born of cultural detritus

and commercial ambition? (Blanchard, 1920; *EMI Classics*, "Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire," 1985, Conducted by Pierre Boulez)

The logic of the pigweed mirrors that of Bresson, who sought to strip away all the trappings of dramatic artifice, to eliminate all elements that might distract from his purpose. He aimed for a cinema of pure essence, a raw, unadorned expression of the spiritual struggle. This, too, is the logic of the pigweed, a brand stripped of artifice, a team that is not a team but a pure, abstract symbol of a region's "wild spirit and enduring charm." Their attire, with its yellow and baby-blue hues, its multiple, distinct logos, is not clothing but a religious vestment, a sacrament of the new faith. They are not playing baseball; they are performing a ritual, a ceremony of rebirth, a dance of the atomized and the surreal. (Bresson, 1975, p. 12; *Blue Note Records*, "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser," 1967, Track 1: "Straight, No Chaser")

The spirit of rebellion and reinvention echoes in "Les Six," a brotherhood of outsiders who gathered in a cafe to talk and work, to find their own way, liberating music from the academic strictures of the past. And in the bohemians of 1830 Paris, a combustible mix of Victor Hugo's new dramaturgy and the Romantic cult of the self, who rejected the old forms and created their own. They were a new kind of individual, a new kind of collective, a new kind of family. A family of strangers, of outsiders, of those deemed "unseemly." A family of artists, poets, and revolutionaries, a family whose very existence was a rejection of the world that had spawned them. (Lesure, 1990, p. 56; *Folkways Records*, "Woody Guthrie: Bound for Glory," 1956, Track 5: "This Land Is Your Land")

This, then, is the new identity of Amarillo. A team that is not a team, but a myth. A plant that is not a plant, but a symbol. A city that is not a city, but a feeling. A feeling of fractured beauty, of infinite suffering, of a wild and enduring charm. This is the new, unhinged collage, the new essay, a fusion of the past and the present, the real and the unreal, a surrealist fever-dream told in the language of baseball and botany. It is a story of transformation, of becoming something new, something of the wind and the dust, a new family of strangers, of outsiders, a new universalism born from the broken pieces of the old. The new is the old, and the old is the new. All is one, and all is nothing. (Derrida,

1967, p. 141; *EMI Classics*, "Mahler: Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection'," 1963, Conducted by Otto Klemperer)

References

- Blanchard, M. (1920). *Child with a Hoop*. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou.
- Bresson, R. (1975). *Notes on the Cinematographer*. Urizen Books.
- Derrida, J. (1967). *Of Grammatology*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- de Lorde, A. (1905). *The Theatre of Horror*. Grand-Guignol Press.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press.
- Lesure, F. (1990). *Les Six: The French Composers Who Revolutionized Music*. Amadeus Press.
- Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned Reflexes: An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex*. Oxford University Press.
- Smith, J. (2018). *The Desert's Savage History*. University of Texas Press.

Discography

- **Dust Bowl Ballads** (1940). *Folkways Records*.
- **Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring** (1960). *EMI Classics*. Conducted by Pierre Monteux.
- **John Coltrane: A Love Supreme** (1964). *Blue Note Records*.
- **Negro Prison Songs** (1956). *Folkways Records*.
- **Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire** (1985). *EMI Classics*. Conducted by Pierre Boulez.
- **Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser** (1967). *Blue Note Records*.
- **Woody Guthrie: Bound for Glory** (1956). *Folkways Records*.
- **Mahler: Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection'** (1963). *EMI Classics*. Conducted by Otto Klemperer.

Do Not Use Your Airsickness Bag as a Pinata as it will Greatly Upset the Children

By Terrance Ojimky

In the act itself—an eruption, a violent exhalation of what was once contained,
a force that shatters the silence of the body,
the stomach rebels, convulses, and spills its secrets
through the mouth, the nose—an involuntary cry
rising from depths that words cannot reach.

It is not reason but instinct—
the body's primal response to chaos, to poison, to pain,
an explosion of acid and undigested memories,
a purge that leaves behind the echoes of what was swallowed,
what was taken in and now must be expelled.

The buildup is silent at first—
a nausea like a shadow creeping along the walls of consciousness,
a whisper of discomfort,
a warning that the flood is coming,
that the body's defenses are breaking,

that containment is futile.

Then, the pressure–
a tightening, a squeezing,
as if the stomach itself is a prison,
the walls stretching, stretching–
until they cannot hold the weight of what has accumulated,
and the dam breaks.

Retching–
a series of spasms,
an uncoordinated dance of muscles fighting to stay in control,
but losing to the chaos within,
a rhythmic, violent heaving–
an ancient, corporeal rhythm that echoes through generations–

It is the body's ancient ritual,
a silent scream that stretches back to the earliest caves,
when shamans and hunters,
faced with the unknown, the dangerous,
would vomit as a form of cleansing–
a spiritual act, a sacred sacrifice,
believed to banish evil spirits,
to purify the soul in the act of expulsion.

In cultures of old, the vomit was a sign–
a symbol of renewal, of rebirth–
a necessary destruction before rebirth could begin.
The Greeks, the Romans, the real estate agents of the Amazon–
all recognized in this act a bridge between the flesh and the divine,
a moment when the internal chaos briefly overtakes the rational mind,
and the spirit is freed through the body's revolt.

And in the medieval monasteries–
the monks would kneel,
and in their quiet suffering,
find a strange form of salvation–
a ritual of purification through the vomit of prayer or penance,
a confession made manifest in the visceral–the primal scream of contrition.

Today, it persists–
a visceral echo of those ancient truths–
a bodily rebellion against the world's poisons,
against the unnameable toxins of our modern existence–
whether food, disease, fear, or grief.
Vomit–an act that strips us bare–
not only of what we have consumed,
but of illusions, of pretenses,
of the false calm that masks our internal storms.

It is the body's confession,
a language unfiltered,
the raw voice of the flesh,
crying out in a universal tongue–
a reminder that beneath the veneer of civility,
we are still creatures of chaos,
captive to the primal rhythms of survival.

Baerheim, A., and H. Sandvik. "Effect of ale, garlic, and soured cream on the appetite of leeches." *Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association* 114, no. 12 (1994): 1461–1462.

Cobb, Isaac. *History and Genealogy of the Cobb Family in New England*. Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

🦊🦫 Ĺı̨l ŢĮN y ⓈQuƐє ∽qυєE ☙🥕. Two Photographs. 2025. From the Spring-Wound Mammoth Pancake Coalition Collection. Used with permission.

Vonnegut, Bernard. "Chicken plucking as a measure of tornado wind speed." *Weatherwise* 28, no. 2 (1975): 161–163.